

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 13-19 as follows:

1. (Withdrawn) A user interface comprising:
 - a plurality of selectable graphical elements, each of the graphical elements representing a respective attribute level of a product attribute;
 - a first area for presenting at least one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by a respondent as representing an unacceptable attribute level;
 - a second area for presenting one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by the respondent as representing a least-preferred attribute level; and
 - a third area for presenting one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by the respondent as representing a most-preferred attribute level.
2. (Withdrawn) A user interface according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - an interface allowing the respondent to associate at least one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements with a value representing the respondent's preference for the attribute level represented by the at least one element.
3. (Withdrawn) A user interface according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - a fourth area for presenting at least one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by the respondent as representing a required attribute level.
4. (Withdrawn) A user interface according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - a fourth area for presenting one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by the respondent as representing a most-preferred attribute level.

5. (Withdrawn) A computer-readable medium storing processor-executable process steps to provide a user interface, the user interface comprising:

a plurality of selectable graphical elements, each of the graphical elements representing a respective attribute level of a product attribute;

a first area for presenting at least one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by a respondent as representing an unacceptable attribute level;

a second area for presenting one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by the respondent as representing a least-preferred attribute level; and

a third area for presenting one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by the respondent as representing a most-preferred attribute level.

6. (Withdrawn) A medium according to claim 5, the user interface further comprising:

an interface allowing the respondent to associate at least one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements with a value representing the respondent's preference for the attribute level represented by the at least one element.

7. (Withdrawn) A medium according to claim 5, the user interface further comprising:

a fourth area for presenting at least one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by the respondent as representing a required attribute level.

8. (Withdrawn) A medium according to claim 5, further comprising:

a fourth area for presenting one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that has been designated by the respondent as representing a most-preferred attribute level.

9. (Withdrawn) A user interface comprising:

interface elements manipulable by a respondent to designate one or more product attribute levels as unacceptable, to designate a first attribute level as a least-preferred attribute level, and to designate a second attribute level as a most-preferred attribute level.

10. (Withdrawn) A user interface according to claim 9, further comprising:

interface elements manipulable by a respondent to associate at least one attribute level with a quantitative value representing the respondent's preference for the at least one attribute level.

11. (Withdrawn) A computer-readable medium storing processor-executable process steps to provide a user interface, the user interface comprising:

interface elements manipulable by a respondent to designate one or more product attribute levels as unacceptable, to designate a first attribute level as a least-preferred attribute level, and to designate a second attribute level as a most-preferred attribute level.

12. (Withdrawn) A medium according to claim 11, the user interface further comprising:

interface elements manipulable by a respondent to associate at least one attribute level with a quantitative value representing the respondent's preference for the at least one attribute level.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for determining preference information associated with a respondent and a product, comprising:

~~a first step of~~ determining, for each of a plurality of attribute levels associated with a product attribute, a classification of the attribute level as one of unacceptable, most-preferred or least-preferred;

~~a second step of~~ determining, ~~after the first step~~, a ranked order of a plurality of product attributes including the product attribute;

~~a third step of determining, after the second step,~~ a relative importance of one or more of the plurality of product attributes; and

~~a fourth step of determining~~ a part worth value associated with an attribute level of one of the plurality of attributes based at least on a classification of the attribute level and on a determined relative importance of the associated product attribute.

14. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 13, further comprising:

~~a step of determining, after~~ determining the classification ~~the first step and before determining the ranked order the second step,~~ a plurality of piles of product attributes, each of the plurality of piles comprising one or more of the plurality of product attributes, wherein the plurality of piles are determined based on an indication that one or more of the plurality of product attributes are more important to the respondent than another one or more of the plurality of product attributes.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 13, wherein ~~the step of~~ determining the classification comprises:

receiving, via a single user interface, a designation of the attribute level of the plurality of attribute levels associated with the product attribute that is most-preferred by the respondent, a designation of the attribute level of the plurality of attribute levels associated with the product attribute that is least-preferred by the respondent, and a designation of one or more attribute levels of the plurality of attribute levels associated with the product attribute that are unacceptable to the respondent.

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 13, wherein ~~the step of~~ determining the classification of each of the plurality of attribute levels comprises:

determining the classification of each of the ranked order of the plurality of attribute levels based on expected consumer preferences.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 13, wherein determining the classification ~~the first step~~ comprises a ~~step of~~ determining a classification of at least one of the plurality of attribute levels as intermediately-preferred.

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 13, wherein determining the classification further ~~the first step~~ comprises a ~~step of~~ determining a classification of at least one of the plurality of attribute levels as required.

19. (Currently Amended) A device comprising:

- a processor; and
- a storage device in communication with the processor and storing instructions adapted to be executed by the processor to[[;]]:

- ~~firstly~~ determine, for each of a plurality of attribute levels associated with a product attribute, a classification of the attribute level as one of unacceptable, most-preferred, least-preferred, or intermediately-preferred[[,]]; and
- ~~secondly~~ determine a ranked order of a plurality of product attributes[[,]]; and
- ~~thirdly~~ determine a relative importance of one or more of the plurality of product attributes[[,]]; and
- ~~fourthly~~ determine a part worth value associated with an attribute level of one of the plurality of attributes based at least on a classification of the attribute level and on a determined relative importance of the associated product attribute.

20. (Original) A device according to claim 19, wherein the instructions are further adapted to be executed by the processor to receive, via a single user interface, a designation of

the attribute level of the plurality of attribute levels associated with the product attribute that is most-preferred by the respondent, a designation of the attribute level of the plurality of attribute levels associated with the product attribute that is least-preferred by the respondent, and a designation of one or more attribute levels of the plurality of attribute levels associated with the product attribute that are unacceptable to the respondent.

21. (Original) A device according to claim 20, wherein the instructions are further adapted to be executed by the processor to receive, via the single user interface, a designation of one or more attribute levels of the plurality of attribute levels associated with the product attribute that are intermediately-preferred by the respondent.

22. (Original) A device according to claim 20, wherein the instructions are further adapted to be executed by the processor to receive, via the single user interface, a designation of one or more attribute levels of the plurality of attribute levels associated with the product attribute that are required by the respondent.

23. (Withdrawn) A system comprising:
a client system for transmitting attribute levels associated with a product attribute;
a server for receiving the attribute levels and for providing an interface
comprising:

a plurality of selectable graphical elements, each of the graphical elements representing one of the attribute levels;

a first area for presenting at least one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that is designated by a respondent as representing an unacceptable attribute level;

a second area for presenting one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that is designated by the respondent as representing a least-preferred attribute level; and

a third area for presenting one of the plurality of selectable graphical elements that is designated by the respondent as representing a most-preferred attribute level;
and

a respondent device for presenting the interface to the respondent, for receiving designations from the respondent, and for transmitting the designations to the server.

24. (Withdrawn) A system according to claim 23, wherein the server firstly determines, for each of the attribute levels, a classification of the attribute level as one of unacceptable, most-preferred, least-preferred, or intermediately-preferred based on the received designations, secondly determines a ranked order of a plurality of product attributes including the product attribute, thirdly determines a relative importance of one or more of the plurality of product attributes, and fourthly determines a part worth value associated with an attribute level of one of the plurality of attributes based at least on a classification of the attribute level and on a determined relative importance of the associated product attribute.